

THE

FALL 2023

PIPELINE



Newsletter of the California Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CHARLES MARTIN



As we approach the threshold of a new year, I am excited to share our vision and strategic goals for 2024, which I believe will elevate CPMCA to even greater heights of success.

01 Growing Market Share: One of our primary objectives is to expand our market share in the plumbing and mechanical contracting industry. To achieve this, we will focus on enhancing our members' competitive edge through educational programs, access to cutting-edge technology and industry insights. By providing the tools and resources needed to thrive in a dynamic market, we aim to see a substantial increase in our members' market share.

02 Future Union Negotiations: We recognize the importance of fostering strong relationships with labor unions to ensure our members' interests are well-represented. In 2024, we will actively engage in negotiations to secure favorable terms and conditions for our contractors, with a focus on productivity, safety, and fair labor practices. Our goal is to create an environment of mutual cooperation that benefits both labor and management, fostering a harmonious industry landscape.

03 Enhanced Training Programs: CPMCA is committed to providing top-tier training opportunities for our members. In 2024, we plan to take this commitment to new heights by expanding our training programs. This includes offering advanced courses, certifications, and workshops that align with industry trends and emerging technologies. Our aim is to equip our members with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in an ever-evolving industry.

04 Attracting New Members and Growing the CPMCA Chapter: CPMCA has a rich history and is renowned as one of the leading chapters of the Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA). To maintain and strengthen our position, we must actively seek new members who share our vision and values. I encourage each board member to play an active role in member recruitment. By expanding our ranks, we not only increase our collective strength but also contribute to the overall growth and success of our chapter.

Next year is poised to be a year of transformation and growth for CPMCA. I am confident that, with your unwavering support and dedication, we can achieve these

goals and solidify our position as an industry leader. I look forward to collaborating with each of you to make these aspirations a reality.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the success of CPMCA. Together, we can accomplish great things in the coming year and beyond.

Best,

Charles Martin
Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

ROBERT FELIX



In today's Southern California construction environment, best value competitiveness, and dedication to client satisfaction are of the utmost importance.

As CPMCA contractor leaders, we recognize what is needed to stay ahead of our industry advances, while at the same time managing risk and confronting the challenges that we encounter every day.

Sustaining our cause to be the best association of great union contractors, CPMCA has long been the pace-setting promoter of everything from leading safety standards to superior training in the Southern California Mechanical Contracting industry. Our association has consistently represented the essential professional excellence that our industry has been built on.

With the ever-changing times, our continued success and preeminence as the leaders of the union mechanical contracting industry in Southern California is more critical than ever.

We cannot do this with individual efforts and we need to work at this with unity. Working together is essential... "Iron Sharpens Iron" ... so one sharpens another. By collaborating together and especially with our valued labor partners, we strengthen our association and its contracting members. We increase our collective industry influence and ensure that the concerns and priorities of our contractors and union members are set up for success.

As we continue on with this success, we encourage all to stay the course and keep this momentum progressing forward.

Let's preserve the legacy of success that has been established before us, let's enjoy the rewards that result from it, and let's pave the way for the generation after us... It's a perpetual cycle of success.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to CPMCA's mission. Our shared commitment is the catalyst that makes our association a force for positive influence in Southern California.

Warmly,

Robert Felix
ACCO Engineered Systems
Board President, CPMCA



Executive Committee

Robert Felix, President
ACCO Engineered Systems

Jason Gordon, Vice President
Plumbing, Piping & Construction, Inc.

Ed Newville, Secretary
Southland Industries

Steve Fosdick, Treasurer
Murray Company

Jay Chase, Past President
Muir-Chase Plumbing Co., Inc.

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ARB, Inc.

Michael Cables
Kinetic Systems, Inc.

Matthew Cunningham
Jackson & Blanc

Tom Finell
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Peter Fortin
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Jeff Hachey
H.L. Moe Company, Inc.

John Modjeski
University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors

Bryan Suttles
Suttles Plumbing & Mechanical Corporation

Michael Teague
Schultz Industrial Services, Inc.

Steve Valot
Pan-Pacific Mechanical, Inc.

Larry Verne
Verne's Plumbing, Inc.

Management and Staff

Charles Martin, Executive Director

Dana Francesca Giambalvo, Office Management

Michelle Lynn, Director of Special Projects

Jessica Diaz, Director of Education



Left to Right: Don Chase, Jay Chase, Timothy Brink, Tim Heley, Jim DeFlavio, Steve Shirley, David Quirk, Robert Felix, Steve Fosdick, and Steve Cornelius

Past President’s Roundtable

Founded in 1997, the California Plumbing & Mechanical Contractors Association (CPMCA) is the voice of the union mechanical contracting industry in Southern California.

Today, a diverse roster of over 100 businesses makes up the CPMCA member base, and all members are signatories to the District 16 Master Labor Agreement.

Learn more about how CPMCA board presidents moved the chapter forward, making it one of the largest and most successful subcontractor trade associations in the nation.

STEVE SHIRLEY

University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors

PAST PRESIDENT 1997-1998

We went and did something that no one had ever done. We created a new organization and negotiated a 6-year contract with the union. I can’t tell you how many people thought we were crazy at that time to do such a thing. But it turned out to be the right thing. Then, the chapter evolved to what it is today, one of the top chapters in the nation.

TIMOTHY J. BRINK

C.H. Stone Plumbing

PAST PRESIDENT 1999-2000

When I first took on the role of president in this organization, I was fortunate enough to be the third, our

biggest challenge was finding a way to unite everyone. Not everyone was on board with the changes we were implementing in the early stages of CPMCA, and it took some time for everyone to come around. Achieving unity was our ultimate goal, and it required a dedicated, forward-thinking group of individuals to make it happen. Today, CPMCA excels in every way. CPMCA has one of the nation’s best education programs and maintains a level of transparency and labor management that’s unmatched elsewhere.

DON CHASE

Muir-Chase Plumbing Co., Inc.

PAST PRESIDENT 2002-2003, 2012-2013

The biggest challenge I faced was transitioning our executive leadership. The highlight of my work at CPMCA was our efforts to bring everybody back together. It was really important to get people to participate and get new people on the board. I also created the President’s Council. Those are the two things that I helped accomplish. The chapter matured. Everything from how we approach our finances to training programs, we started doing a lot of new things. Our chapter has really evolved, and we’re the standard of the nation, quite honestly. It’s all because of all of the past presidents and CPMCA team that we’re the standard of the nation.

ROBERT HOLLOWED

Scott Company of California

PAST PRESIDENT 2003-2004

When I first got involved with CPMCA, I looked at these folks as fierce competitors. I asked myself, “Why am I in the room with these competitors?” I was very hesitant about what I wanted to share. After I met these guys, I realized that all the issues that I’m facing on a day-to-day basis, we all face as an organization. I had a tremendous amount of mentors who were able to guide us through to be successful. We had a contract negotiation, and we had something strong that was already in place and a good relationship at the time. It was also a good time for me to get my feet wet. The organization was well-structured. I learned a lot about the tremendous amount of the commonality of the business within CPMCA.

TIM R. HEALY

ARB, Inc.

PAST PRESIDENT 2006-2007, 2015-2016

I served as CPMCA board president twice in the past. I remember we were really focused on working with the negotiating committee, because, at that time, there was a pretty substantial change in union leadership. The change had us working with two different leaders during the process, both were great leaders but also very different individuals. We negotiated long-term contract agreements spanning two different eras, if you will, within labor union leadership.

DAVID QUIRK

Performance Mechanical

PAST PRESIDENT 2017-2018

My biggest focus when I came on as board president was that I wanted to capture the history of the chapter. At that time, there was nothing written down about the CPMCA. Then we created a pamphlet that talked about how the chapter was created and who played a role in that process. That was my big accomplishment and it was important. As we all get older, we’re going to lose that information if it isn’t captured.

STEVE CORNELIUS

University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors

PAST PRESIDENT 2017-2018

The biggest challenge I look back on is being a part of the negotiation committee during our long-term contract and sitting next to our partners during that process. Being a UA member myself, it was special to be able to sign that contract. It’s something I’ll always be proud of.

JIM DEFLAVIO

Murray Company

PAST PRESIDENT 2018-2018

What was gratifying for me was working with the District Council 16 team, and it was a strong partnership. There wasn’t anything we couldn’t get done. Although we disagreed on a few things, we had a great working relationship.

JAY CHASE | MUIR-CHASE PLUMBING CO., INC.

Muir-Chase Plumbing Co., Inc.

PAST PRESIDENT 2021-2022

When I became President, we were coming out of COVID-19, and communication was a challenge, and our relationship had taken a hit. We knew we needed to reengage our Exec and the Union’s Business Manager to work on the relationship. The success of this effort is the Market Share Initiative. Labor and Management began working together on a common goal, “to grow our hours in DC 16 by 3% over four years”. This creates a win-win situation! With more hours, the contractors are growing their businesses. More hours also generate more money for the pension and medical funds. As we continue working together, on growing our market share in each Local’s market, our relationship grows stronger than ever!

STEVE FOSDICK

Murray Company

PAST PRESIDENT 2022-2023

We always talk about the importance of the founding members and understanding why the organization was put into place. They laid a foundation for all of us, and it is because of the relationships we established in those early years with our labor partners throughout District Council 16 that we are able to work together. We’ve been through new board members at CPMCA and new District Council 16 business managers and I’m really proud of the fact that throughout all of these changes, we’ve been able to maintain our strong relationships.

ROBERT FELIX

ACCO Engineered Systems

All Area Plumbing, Inc.

PAST PRESIDENT 2009-2010, PRESIDENT 2023-2024

As presidents of the board, we work off of each other. From the previous person’s leadership, the next person has to carry out that vision, too. We’re teeing off of each other. So you will see the similarities. This alignment in leadership has created a smooth path in the sense of continual collaboration and success for the chapter.

Contractor Project Spotlight

As the voice of the union mechanical contracting industry in Southern California, we believe in the businesses that make up our industry. That’s why we are celebrating the outstanding projects completed by members of CPMCA.



GRAND AVENUE PROJECT BY PAN-PACIFIC MECHANICAL

As a full mechanical design-build subcontractor, Pan-Pacific specializes in hospitals, high-rises, entertainment complexes, schools, universities and more. Pan-Pacific was hired for the massive Grand Avenue project in downtown Los Angeles. Grand Avenue Parcel Q was designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry to compliment the surrounding buildings and bring new life to this section of downtown Los Angeles.

[Read the full spotlight.](#)



NORTH HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL BY SUTTLES PLUMBING & MECHANICAL CORP.

Suttles is family-owned and operated since 1970, and today serves as a certified women-owned business, owned by Stephanie Aguilar and Bryan Suttles, a CPMCA board member. The union contract plumbing company performs work from Orange County to Santa Barbara in areas of education, hospitals, entertainment, transportation, high rises, commercial, government buildings and private work.

[Read the full spotlight.](#)

Do you want your company’s project or news to be featured? We want to hear from you!

Reusser is CPMCA’s official marketing team and travels from Fort Wayne, Indiana to attend chapter events to capture marketing content and tell stories. Pictured left to right: [Lauren Lipp](#) and [Julia Hanauer](#).

Stay up to date on all of CPMCA’s member spotlights, industry news and association updates by [following us on social media!](#)



OAS PROJECT BY JACKSON & BLANC

Project Manager Stacey Wyatt works closely with Senior Project Executive Matt Cunningham managing the project. Wyatt manages the budgets and day-to-day work, and Cunningham focuses on relationships and pre-construction estimates. Together, they are responsible for making the massive OAS project happen.

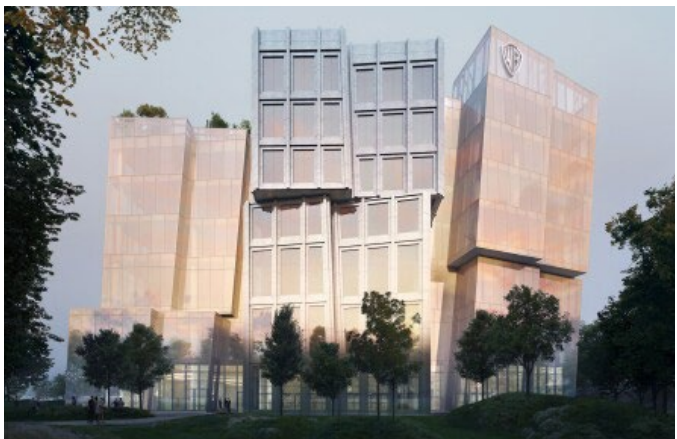
[Read the full spotlight.](#)



INTUIT DOME BY SOUTHLAND INDUSTRIES

As an MEP building systems expert, Southland provides integrated, full lifecycle solutions that optimize the design, construction, operation, and efficiency of buildings. They partner with clients and leverage the collective expertise of their people to create better built environments.

[Read the full spotlight.](#)



WARNER BROTHERS SECOND CENTURY PROJECT BY MUIR-CHASE PLUMBING CO.

Since 1975, Muir-Chase Plumbing Co. has leveraged its quality workmanship and exceptional service to drive results for its business and customers. This philosophy has made them a trusted name in Southern California for over 45 years. Blue Sky Studio Project comprises two new office buildings that are seven and nine stories tall, totaling more than 800,000 square feet of office space and opened in 2023. It’s the newly expanded offices for Warner Brothers.

[Read the full spotlight.](#)

2023 CPMCA Star Safety Awards

WINNERS

- 25,000 to 50,000**
City Commercial Plumbing
- 50,000 to 100,000 Hours**
Desert Mechanical
- 100,000 to 250,000 Hours**
Critchfield Mechanical
- 250,000 to 500,000 Hours**
Smith MEP
- 500,000 to 1,000,000 Hours**
Performance Mechanical
- >1,000,000 Hours**
Schultz

CONGRATS!

Total Hours Submitted:
26,564,282

HONORABLE MENTION

- 25,000 to 50,000**
Monaco Mechanical
- 25,000 to 50,000**
Tier One Mechanical
- 25,000 to 50,000**
Astro Mechanical Contractors, Inc.
- 250,000 to 500,000 Hours**
Suttles Plumbing
- 500,000 to 1,000,000 Hours**
University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors
- > 1,000,000 Hours**
Timec Oil and Gas, Inc.
- > 1,000,000 Hours**
AO Reed
- > 1,000,000 Hours**
ARB, Inc.
- > 1,000,000 Hours**
ACCO Engineered Systems

OVERALL WINNER
Schultz



Labor & Management

In January our Board Members and Labor Partners were back in fabulous Las Vegas for the annual District Council No. 16 & CPMCA Labor & Management Retreat. We were based at the beautiful Encore property, where we enjoyed a welcome dinner featuring one of the highlights of the year, DJ “Chiplo’s” Music Trivia.

We headed off the strip for a day of golf at Bear’s Best, with picturesque views of both the red rocks and city skyline. Our Labor & Management Session featured conversations about marketshare, the A&J Training Center construction, service & repair, and many other updates.

Finally, we concluded our retreat with a closing dinner at Ferraro’s Ristorante, followed by The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil show. As always, the retreat was a great time for Labor & Management to come together and collaborate, get to know each other on a personal level, and have important conversations for the health of the association and industry.





CPMCA Welcomes New Board President at Annual Retreat Event

Our annual retreat took us to beautiful Pebble Beach for several days of connecting with members and celebrating another year of hard work serving as the voice of the union mechanical contracting industry in Southern California.

Following a productive board meeting, Murray Company's Steve Fosdick welcomed ACCO's Bob Felix as CPMCA's new board president.

We also celebrated Don Chase's lasting contributions to the association with a Distinguished Service Award.

Afterward, we hosted a roundtable interview with CPMCA's past Presidents. It was important to reflect on stories of challenges, negotiations, friendships, and accomplishments over the course of each board president's term as leader.

A trip to Pebble Beach wouldn't be complete without a little golf! We played the iconic Pebble Beach, where members enjoyed a cool, sunny day on the legendary course. The following day, members played Spyglass Hill, tucked away in the pines with sweeping ocean views.

Each night concluded with a beautiful cocktail hour overlooking the ocean, followed by dinner among friends and colleagues.

The goal of our retreat is to network with CPMCA membership and celebrate the hard work and collaboration that allows CPMCA to be one of the leading chapters in the nation.



THANK YOU TO OUR

SPONSORS

2023 Annual Retreat Sponsors

AB&I FOUNDRY

Michael Lopez
Eric Ruiz

ASTRO PLUMBING SUPPLY CO.

Rich Atlas

BRADFORD WHITE CORPORATION

Cam Thomsen

CHARLOTTE PIPE AND FOUNDRY COMPANY

Jim Simpson

ELMCO STEWART

Brennon St. Clair
Ron Stewart

FERGUSON

Matthew Obrymski

MAINLINE SALES INC.

Chris Brenier

MEGA WESTERN SALES

Tom Duddy
Josh Buscaglio

MILWAUKEE

Greg Kohl
Alex Macias
Maurice Valentine

MORRIS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

Jim DelRe Reece
Vic Lamberty

UPONOR

Matt Bahr
Nicole Chikhani

VICTAULIC

Joe Stepanski
Greg Tabor
Ian Thomason

Annual Golf Outing Rescheduled
to 2024

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, January 29, 2024



TABLE TOP EVENT DRAWS LARGE CROWD

Offering networking, education and advocacy opportunities to members is a cornerstone of CPMCA. Connecting contracting member companies with affiliate and associate (A/A) members is another important piece to that puzzle. Our 2023 Topgolf Table Top event was designed to offer a fun and relaxed setting for conversations, while also intentionally creating moments for contractors and A/A members to meet and connect.

“Our goal for the Table Top networking event was to create a space for A/A to showcase their products as well as encourage both contractors and A/A to build strong, long lasting relationships with one another. We hope the event did just that.”

MICHELLE LYNN

CPMCA Director of Special Projects



Meet Our Scholarship Awardees

We are proud to announce the CPMCA Scholarship Program recipients! The \$2,500 scholarship for the 2023-2024 school year is funded by the annual golf tournament. This year, **we are pleased to award scholarships to nearly 30 students.** Get to know a few of our scholarship recipients.

SCHOLARSHIP FEATURE



LILY YOUNGDALE
San Diego Mesa College

My dad is a general foreman for University Mechanical, and he told me about this scholarship and suggested I apply. This scholarship helped me pay for my textbooks and helps me feel like I am being as successful as I possibly can as a student in college. I am so incredibly thankful to have received this scholarship. Thank you so much for allowing me to be as successful as I possibly can!



KAITLYN BOYD
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Major: Business Administration
GPA: 4.3
Company Affiliation:
ACCO Engineered Systems



SETH ELLIOTT
Concordia University – Wisconsin
Major: Business Management/
Marketing
GPA: 3.88
Company Affiliation:
UA Local 582



PARIS CORREIA
Biola University
Major: Nursing
GPA: 3.7
Company Affiliation:
University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors



DEZHANE BUSH
Nightingale College
Major: Nursing (BSN)
GPA: 3.07
Company Affiliation:
Schultz Industrial



PAYTON CORREIA
Santa Barbara City College
Major: Undecided
GPA: 4.08
Company Affiliation:
University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors



ZACHARY COBOS
Arizona State University
Major: Mechanical Engineering
GPA: 3.52
Company Affiliation:
District Council #16



HANNAH GLEASON
UC Riverside
Major: Business Administration
GPA: 3.75
Company Affiliation:
ARB, Inc.



RILEY RICHARDSON
Cal State University, San Bernardino
Major: Nursing
GPA: 4.2
Company Affiliation:
University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors



CAMBRIA JOHNSON
Arizona State University
Major: Communications/Digital Audiences
GPA: 3.83
Company Affiliation:
ARB, Inc.



JORDAN MARIN
Cal State Long Beach
Major: Construction Engineering Management
GPA: 3.6
Company Affiliation:
Control Air



JUSTINE MARSHALL
California Baptist University
Major: Exercise Science
GPA: 3.49
Company Affiliation:
Control Air



ANDREA SANABRIA – MOEIRA
Cal Poly Pomona
Major: Biotechnology
GPA: 3.18
Company Affiliation:
ACCO Engineering Systems



LIZ SEYMOUR
Cal State Long Beach
Major: Marine Biology
GPA: 4.2
Company Affiliation:
Murray Company



ANDREA VELA
Cal State Fullerton
Major: Communication Disorders
GPA: 3.35
Company Affiliation:
UA Local 582



ISABEL VERNE
Northern Arizona University
Major: Journalism/Broadcast
GPA: 3.8
Company Affiliation:
Verne's Plumbing



JEFFREY VERNE
Hope International University
Major: Political Science (Pre-Contract Law)
GPA: 3.72
Company Affiliation:
Verne's Plumbing



LILY YOUNGDALE
Northern Arizona
Major: Elementary Education
GPA: 3.06
Company Affiliation:
University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors

DIEGO ALCALA

University of Southern California

Major: Business Administration

GPA: 4.50

Company Affiliation:

Control Air

JADA ARREOLA

UCLA

Major: Psychobiology/Linguistics

GPA: 3.0

Company Affiliation:

Control Air

JOCELYNN BLAS

Cerritos College

Major: Child Development & Cosmetology

GPA: 3.0

Company Affiliation:

Muir-Chase Plumbing

ALYSSA GALINDO

Grand Canyon University

Major: Nursing

GPA: 3.8

Company Affiliation:

Control Air

SCHOLARSHIP FEATURES

JUSTINE MARSHALL

California Baptist University

My dad was very excited for me to apply. I wanted to do it for him and myself because I knew it would help us financially in the long run. I used the scholarship to pay for part of my summer tuition. This scholarship is bringing me closer to finishing my undergraduate degree by supporting my summer tuition and allowing me to get ahead in my required courses. This scholarship is worth the time, and it has an overall positive impact on students. Thank you so much. I am so thankful and appreciative to earn this scholarship.



SETH ELLIOTT

Concordia University-Wisconsin

I applied for the scholarship to help me achieve my dream of becoming the first person in my family to graduate college. This scholarship helps me tremendously by being able to take off some of the financial stress of college. I am majoring in business management and marketing because I want to become a creative leader and own my own business.

SCHOLARSHIP FEATURE



ISABEL VERNE

Northern Arizona University

I applied for this scholarship because I am passionate about learning, and wanted to go to college. This scholarship is helping me pay for my undergrad classes, so I will one day be able to get my Master's or doctorate degree in Exercise Physiology or Biochemistry. I am excited to continue college and get my degree, so I can help athletes. I first went to college with a major in journalism, and now I know what I want to do. I appreciate CPMCA for helping make college a bit more affordable, so I was able to see what my future looks like. Without going to college, I never would have believed one day I would be able to help athletes like me.

LUKE GLEASON

UC Riverside

Major: Business Administration

GPA: 3.25

Company Affiliation:

ARB, Inc.

ISAAC GUZMAN

University of Utah

Major: Mechanical Engineering

GPA: 4.57

Company Affiliation:

Suttles Plumbing

LINDSAY GWEN VALDEZ

Cornell University

Major: Viticulture and Enology

GPA: 4.04

Company Affiliation:

ARB, Inc.

LEILA HERNANDEZ

Northern Arizona University

Major: Psychology/Studio Art

GPA: 2.78

Company Affiliation:

Murray Company

LORNA PHILLIPS

Southern University

Major: Nursing

GPA: 3.6

Company Affiliation:

Control Air

LITZA RODRIGUEZ

Columbia Southern University

Major: Occupational Safety and Health

GPA: 3.0

Company Affiliation:

Pan-Pacific Mechanical

KAGEN SNYDER

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Major: Mechanical Engineering

GPA: 3.87

Company Affiliation:

City Commercial Plumbing

GRACE VERNE-EDWARDS

University of Phoenix

Major: Business/Nutrition

GPA: 3.62

Company Affiliation:

Verne's Plumbing



CPMCA contractors and students from Cal Poly Pomona's Engineering Colleges networked at a CPMCA-hosted mixer in March 2023

Welcome Cal Poly Pomona MCAA Student Chapter!

CPMCA is thrilled to welcome the new MCAA Student Chapter at Cal Poly Pomona. As a sponsor of the new chapter, the goal is to create a space for students to learn more about the different facets of our industry.

The chapter will engage student members with activities including meetings with companies, visiting contractor offices or job sites and attending fundraisers or MCAA events.

“Our goal is to bridge the gap between our member companies and college students looking for a career in the Mechanical Contracting industry,” said CPMCA Board Member Harry Bederian of ARB, Inc.

Contractors are faced with a large portion of the workforce that will retire in the next few years. CPMCA contractors can benefit from the student chapter by building

relationships with young talent, while students benefit by learning about potential career paths and all that the industry has to offer.

“It’s important for contractors to find young talent and critical for students to know that there are industries (like ours) that exist. Our industry is a place where young talent can advance quickly and establish a life-long career. With construction trending the way it is in Southern California, the career path can provide a stable career as young folks get married and start families,” said Michelle Lynn, CPMCA Director of Special Projects. “It’s imperative that we establish a strong pipeline of young, bright minds for our industry and this chapter will help with that.”



THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

LEAH GUTMANN



ABOUT LEAH GUTMANN:
Leah Gutmann, owner of First Forward Consulting, LLC, specializes in a wide variety of training, program development, design, and consulting services including communications, leadership, emotional intelligence, instructor training, and financial training. [Click to read more.](#)

“Over the course of my 30-year career in the mechanical contracting industry I can’t count the number of times I’ve heard the old saying “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” It has gotten to where every time I hear it, it sounds like nails on a chalkboard. The reality is that this phrase is more wishful thinking than reality. The actual saying should be something along the lines of “The more things change, the more responsibility we have to shift the way we approach our business.” And by business, I mean our greatest resource, our people. The well-known metaphor of being at a crossroads couldn’t be more true or prevalent as we look out and try to predict the future of our industry.

I have always believed that the goal of any mechanical contracting business should be to achieve sustainable, long-term growth. Historically, especially over the last 10 years, we have achieved this by pushing the theory of doing more with less, or at a minimum, just doing more. In tandem with this general approach, we cling to traditional business practices that have worked for decades. Hiring practices along with employee-related policies and procedures have changed very little over the past decade. The problem presents itself in that we are finding it more difficult each year to achieve the results we seek via the way we’ve always accomplished them. Thus, the need for a fundamental shift.

Circling back to our crossroads reference, envision approaching an intersection in your company vehicle with the snazzy logo on the side and as you slow down there are several red lights flashing at you to stop and proceed with caution. Our gut tells us to cross the street and travel the same comfortable path we’ve always taken to get to our destination even though that route has become increasingly hazardous to travel. Taking the typical path will eventually get you there, but at what cost? At some point, we have to make a strategic decision to find a new route to our desired destination or else we risk

finding ourselves on the side of the road without roadside assistance, in an outdated vehicle with no fuel. How we view our organizations and our path to sustainability is no different. As an industry we are at our own unprecedented crossroads. To continue to achieve year after year success we have to find a new way. Instead of forging ahead, we should pause and pay attention to our own caution signs and flashing red lights. What got us to where we are today will not carry us through to achieving where we want to be in the years to come.

Purpose drives motivation and motivation drives productivity. And as we all know, productivity is the most direct path to profitability. By connecting people more closely with our business goals, we create a visible roadmap for individuals to reach their own goals and it allows them to see their own contribution to company goals.

The mechanical contracting industry is being confronted with a set of unique challenges that require our full attention. We are experiencing a long-term field labor shortage that must be tackled immediately and with unprecedented commitment. In addition, the people at our companies are forever changing. The generational shift is real and is here to stay. As older generations retire, we are faced with not only a knowledge gap but a shift in job responsibilities and expectations. Our hiring pool is much different than in recent years, and we are seeing a shift in organizational needs as client’s needs change. The impact of 2020 on how we work, why we work, and our priorities has also fundamentally changed the landscape of motivating and retaining employees at every level of our companies. And finally, AI and technology will continue to impact how we work both in the field and in the office. These changes, along with so many others facing our industry, serve as our flashing red lights. The impetus for change is right in front of us and we must find ways to take advantage of what these changes can mean for our organizations and for our industry. The goal is to find ways to foundationally shift our approach to our work and, more importantly, our people.”

[Click to read the full article.](#)

A&J Training Center Update

Apprentice & Journeyman Training Trust started construction on its new, state-of-the-art training facility in early 2023. The new facility will be centrally located in the Greater Los Angeles area in El Monte, CA. With 200,000 combined square feet of training space spread over 9.5 acres and 5 buildings, the new training facility will be a great contribution to developing and advancing elite professionals in the Southern California plumbing and piping industry.

- **Pipefitting Building**
- **Plumbing Building**
- **Lecture Hall**
- **Student Services Building**
- **Live Instructional Garden**



Upcoming Courses

CPMCA is committed to consistently developing a broad and diverse curriculum for our membership. Visit our website to view upcoming courses and registration details.

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